MINUTES OF THE MEETING OF ST MATTHEW'S GOVERNING BODY, HELD AT SCHOOL ON THURSDAY, 24TH SEPTEMBER 2015 AT 6.15 P.M.

Governors: Zoe Thorn (Chair), Carole Mills (Vice Chair), Kevin Blencowe, Jill Tuffnell, Neil Perry,

Lucy Walker, Emily Evans, Melissa Hatcher, Joanna Dean, Sarah Ransome,

Sam Wilkes Read, Gavin Ayliffe, Tony Davies (Headteacher),

In attendance: Annabelle Lewis, Liz Steel, Kate Spencer-Allen (Assistant Headteachers)

Clerk: Lis Silver (Clerk to Governors)

		ACTION
1.	Apologies for absence	
	No apologies were received. Mark Tinkler did not attend the meeting	
2.	Declaration of pecuniary interests	
	Governors had no additional direct or indirect pecuniary interests to declare relating	
	to items on today's agenda. It was noted that new forms for governors to complete	
	for the initial declaration of interests at the first meeting of the autumn term had been circulated with the papers. Governors were asked to return them	
	(electronically to the Clerk at or hard copies to the School Office) to enable the	
	register of interests to be published on the website.	
3.	Introductions	
	The Chair welcomed governors back after the summer break. She introduced the	
	new Clerk to all the governors and gave a brief summary of her career including the	
	fact that she had clerked for 7 years in the FE sector and had an NVQ5 in FE Governance. She advised the Board that interviews had been conducted by the	
	Chair, the Headteacher and Sam Wilkes read and they had been very impressed by	
	her experience at interview.	
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4.	Election of Chair and Vice Chair	
	The Chair advised that this is a Standing Item at the first meeting of the academic	
	year. However since these appointments had already been made at the last	
	meeting of the previous year as part of the Reconstitution of the governing body	
	she suggested that the decisions made at the previous meeting should be ratified by	
	the Board of governors rather than holding new elections.	
	The Board of governors unanimously agreed that the elections held at the last	
	meeting of the previous academic year should be ratified at this meeting for the	
	coming year (Chair – Zoe Thorn, Vice Chair – Carole Mills)	
5.	Minutes of the last meeting	
<u>J.</u>	The minutes were agreed with no changes for signing by the Chair.	
6.	Matters arising or agreed actions update	

The following matters arising were noted: With relation to the Reconstitution/introduction of the Instrument of Governance it was confirmed that new terms of office started in September. Item 6 – Health related survey- now on school website Item 7 – a presentation on Target tracker (new assessment system) will be coming to the next Curriculum Committee Item 12 Meet the Head – a governor advised that the newsletters had not Tony been circulated to governors as agreed. The Head teacher confirmed that the most recent newsletters were available on the website but as agreed would be circulated in future to governors. Link Governor visits – in answer to a question as to whether Link governor visits had been carried out as scheduled prior to the full Governing Body (FGB) the Board were advised that these roles were currently under review Link and would be discussed later in the meeting. Three visits had been done Governors (Carole, Neil and Lucy) and outstanding visits should be completed before the next relevant Committee meeting. 7. **Raising Standards** a) Head Teacher's report Tony highlighted the main areas of his report, which had been circulated with the agenda. Attendance for the last year was good (96.1%), an increase on the previous year and likely to be above the national average. One of the governors asked about the 8 children with attendance below 85% and was advised that these are followed up by Annabelle Lewis, Assistant Head teacher, and the Education Welfare Officer. Annabelle advised that this group includes children with long term health problems and is not just children who don't attend. She works with the pupils involved and follows up on the variety of circumstances that have led to their poor attendance. She noted that the school also works with a group of children where intervention has prevented them falling into this category. The class teachers identify and monitor children where there is a concern about their attendance. A question was asked about the reasons for school refusal and whether there was more the school could be doing and were advised that the reasons are varied and include family problems and mental health issues. The school uses a multi-pronged approach to follow up on all these children including visits to the home but it is not always possible to resolve the issue. In addition the support and resources available outside the school have reduced significantly in recent times as a result of eroded budgets. **PREVENT** - the governors were advised that Liz is the appointed Lead and will give Liz a training presentation for governors at the next FGB since the training of the FGB is one of the mandatory requirements of Prevent. Liz will also train up all staff within the school. In addition schools have been advised that they should have a statement on their website indicating that they actively promote "fundamental British values". To ensure inclusivity within the school a customised statement has been prepared (included in the report) to indicate that the school supports these key values but recognises that they are not exclusively British and would be supported by many of the communities represented in the school. One of the governors suggested that

the statement should include a hyperlink on the word "Prevent" giving a clear definition of what is covered by the legislation; which deals with all extreme views that might lead to acts of terrorism since there is much misunderstanding.

The Board approved the customised statement for publication on the website with a hyperlink providing additional information on what "Prevent" covers.

Tony advised that the school is completely full from Reception to Year 6 (with 1 vacant place currently being allocated). At the end of the summer there was a waiting list of 108 children including some who had moved and now lived in the catchment area. He noted that this is an issue for many of the primary schools across the city and there will be a number of Appeals in the coming weeks. In answer to a question raised by Neil he advised there had been to date only one Appeal related to St Matthews and the Year 1 pupil who lived out of catchment area (with no special needs) had been successful. Post appeal it was identified that there were in fact spaces at the school and the pupil has been accommodated with no special arrangements. Tony advised that Appeal is the last stage of the process and is heard by an Independent Appeal panel for the County whose decision cannot be contested. The County Admissions team will be under pressure since the number of staff has been significantly reduced.

Sarah, one of the Parent governors asked about whether there had been leavers other than those in Year 6 and a small number that were relocating and it was confirmed that no one had left the school because they were unhappy. Exit interviews had not been carried out at this time because the Exit interview questions had been used for the recent Parent survey that had gone to all Parents. However it was noted that the Exit questionnaire would be given to parents of pupils who were leaving for any reason other than at the end of Year Six and the data compiled and made available to the Board. In answer to a question Tony noted that there was only one class that had more than 30 children but this is a different group to the large class the previous year.

In answer to a governor's question Tony advised that independent air conditioning had been installed by the County in all the classrooms over the summer to rectify the poor design and work had just been completed in time. There are no plans for installation in staff areas or the hall. Whilst the units appear to be effective it is difficult to be certain until there is a period of very hot weather. One of the staff governors confirmed that she had run her classroom a/c unit at the start of term and it could be controlled individually in each class and had been so effective in reducing the temperature that it had been necessary to turn it off very rapidly. Governors were advised that there are now opening windows in the offices and that mobile air conditioning can be used in any areas where a problem is identified e.g. Assistant Heads office or the Year 6 leaving assemblies in the hall.

b) Consideration of Draft Annual Governance statement

The Chair advised that there was one error in the document that had been circulated and it should read 9 co-opted governors under Governance arrangements. It was noted that this is essentially a record of what the Governing body has done in the last year with a small amount of information on the future plans. The names used for the Committees during the previous year have been used although it was noted that the name of the Curriculum Committee may change

for the current year and this will be discussed at the first Committee meeting. Governors suggested that there should be more emphasis in the report on the role and responsibilities of Link Governors. It was also noted that some training was missing from the list; a full report is usually received from governor services and this will be added to the report when available. In addition internal training should be listed in the report for completeness. It was agreed that the Chair should be notified of any training that governors were aware was missing including any training done outside the school that is relevant to their role as a governor. It was noted that the demonstration on e-communication had actually taken place the previous year and should be removed from the report.

Action: Report to be updated as agreed at the meeting and published on the website

Chair

c) Safeguarding Policies Update:

The meeting were advised that as part of the preparation for the next School Development plan the Headteacher has audited all policies in the school. These policies are brought to the Governing body according to the policy review cycle and at this time of the year the governing body look at the Safeguarding policies. No major changes have been identified this year but the policies have been updated including references to the Prevent Lead, Female genital Mutilation and reference new documents. It was noted that the school works hard to keep Child protection at the centre of all they do and the Child Protection whistleblowing Policy: Guidance for Employees is displayed on toilet doors. The documents reviewed by the meeting included:

- Review of work on all St Matthews policies (September 15) this
 document provides a map of what the school has to have plus
 documents that have been found to be useful.
- Safeguarding and Child Protection Policy (Cambs County Council draft)
- Child protection Whistleblowing Policy: guidance for Employees (to raise awareness)
- EPM Model Whistle blowing policy and procedure
- Child Protection Monitoring report to governors
 Written annually by the Lead person for Safeguarding ((Annabelle) and listing all the training done
- Safeguarding children in Education checklist for Governing bodies
- EPM Model Statement re Allegations of Abuse against Staff and Volunteers
- Link Visit report for Child protection and Safeguarding
- Link Governor Visit for Special Educational Needs

Governors asked a number of questions regarding the review and implementation of policies. Jill noted that there are a small number of non-statutory policies that are overdue for review (e.g. Charging and remissions, Homework, Persistent Complaints and Harassment) and the Board were advised that the work on reconstitution had led to some reviews being delayed but that this would be caught up during the academic year. It was also noted that there is no date for review of the Health & Safety policy and it was explained that this policy is held and updated by the local authority. It was agreed that notes should be added to the document to clarify anomalies and an action included in the School Development plan to ensure out of date documents are prioritised for review with a check on progress at

Tony

the end of the year.

Governors expressed concern if Ofsted were to become aware of policies that had been delayed in the review process and were advised that Ofsted would focus on the major policies like Safeguarding. They would focus their attention on what was happening in the classroom and would only look at other policies if they identified concerns.

Jo asked if people that came into the school to run activities adhered to their own or the school's Safeguarding policies and was advised that large organisations (e.g. Premier football, After School club) would have their own policy and the school would have a copy but small organisations/individuals would operate using the school Safeguarding policy. The green Safeguarding booklet is given to all regular visitors, who are likely to have contact with children, to read as a way of signalling the priority the school places on this area. It was noted that regular volunteers that work with the children are asked to sign to say they are aware of the requirements for safeguarding both prior to visiting and then following their initial meeting with the class teacher. This is an area where risk assessment is required and the level of monitoring tailored to the amount of time the visitor is in school and the level of contact with children. The Board were advised that the Child protection policy and Keeping Children Safe document are both published on the website.

In response to a question about volunteers helping with changing for swimming governors were advised that it is no longer possible to DBS check parents for casual volunteering. However in all situations sensible precautions are in place and children are unlikely to be at risk in a crowded changing room. It was also noted that governors are no longer DBS checked since they do not meet the definition for regulated activity as they only have infrequent supervised contact with children.

It was noted that a balance needs to be kept to ensure that Committees have time to review and be aware of all relevant policies but do not get bogged down in detail which can be time consuming, have limited impact on outcomes for pupils and prevent adequate discussion of other important aspects of the Board's work. Key policies go to the relevant Committee for detailed review before coming to the FGB for approval. To focus the work of the FGB a suggestion was made that some minor policies could be reviewed by the SLT and a link given to all governors so those who were interested in a particular area could look at in more detail.

The Full Governing Body formally approved the Safeguarding policies

Action to be included in the School Development Plan (SDP) to ensure out of date documents are prioritised for review with a check on progress at the end of the year when the SDP has been finalised.

Tony

- d) Developing our next School Development Plan (SDP)
 - i) Consider outcomes from pupil, parent and staff governors

 Tony explained that the role of the SDP is to provide a document that shows
 the priorities for future work. Information provided by the recent surveys
 and other work that has identified areas for action are considered and
 turned into plans for the future with clear achievable targets, set to make
 the most difference in the school. He advised that the questions used had
 been taken from Ofsted with small modifications to make them closed

questions for the pupils.

On the parent survey 160 parents had responded, which for a school population of 550 is considered by Ofsted to be a good response rate. Whilst a significant number of parents did not identify the Year group(s) their child is in there was sufficient identified responses to show that the survey represented the full range of the school and were not just from one age group or gender. The number of parents that indicated their child had a special need or disability was representative of the distribution in school, but the number indicating that their home language is not English was lower than other data indicates. The majority of responses indicated that they were White British or other background with a small number indicating white and Asian or other mixed backgrounds, however 15% preferred not to say. It was noted that there was a very small group of parents (approx. 6%) who had responded negatively to many questions but it was understood that if your child was not feeling safe or happy for any reason it would be difficult to be positive about other areas. Tony ran through each of the areas addressed and noted that good responses (agree or strongly agree above 90%) had been received on happiness of child, feeling safe, making good progress, well looked after, taught well, well behaved, well led and managed, recommend school,

Other questions showed greater diversity in responses

- appropriate homework only 72% agreeing and the few comments received indicated that some thought it was too much and some too little or not at the right levels. It was agreed that a follow up survey should be used to get more detailed feedback on homework.
- receiving valuable information on child's progress only 81% agreed so this is an area where improvements should be targeted.
- dealing effectively with bullying there was a significant (29%) 'Don't Know" vote. In addition comments and feedback from school Council indicates that people often respond more generally about others perceptions rather than their own.
- Of the parents that had needed to contact a governor the majority agreed that they had been able to do so but 76% had marked this "Not applicable". Governors asked whether this raised a question about their profile in the school and whether parents would be clear about what they should be contacted about. It was agreed that some actions in the SDP (putting pictures on website and a table of how and why governors can be contacted) might be valuable. It was noted that there had been both positive and negative feedback to the inclusion of information on governors in the Newsletter.
- There was an almost equal split on the question about receiving the appropriate level of information on governors and the subsequent question showed that overwhelmingly these parents did not consider they got enough information although 7% of this group had too much information.

Tony advised that the Pupil survey had been done confidentially in the classroom on paper. Again there were several areas where the majority of responses were positive. Significant issues highlighted included that 42

SLT

children did not feel safe. Staff governors indicated that this survey had been done with Year 1s after break time early in the term and it may be that had impacted this question. It was suggested that the survey should be repeated at a different time of the day to see if different results were obtained. It was noted that 78% of children thought there homework was right – this was higher than anticipated and pleasing to see. 72% thought that St Matthews children were well behaved; evidence from other areas indicates that the majority think they are well behaved, their class is well behaved but that other classes aren't so in future it may be useful to ask more targeted questions in this area. Tony noted that one area of concern is that while there were no obvious trends for different age groups there were some classes where all the results were positive and other classes (in different year groups) with a much bigger split in responses. This valuable information will be used to look at friendship groups and possible staff training. It was noted that since the questionnaire was done in the first week of the term that some of the responses could reflect events of the previous year. Tony noted that this data gives a good baseline for the year and will help the school monitor the impact of changes by repeating the survey later in the year. One of the parent governors asked if the Headteacher would consider mixing up year groups and he confirmed that this would be one of his options.

Tony advised that the feedback from both these surveys would be followed up and specific actions included in the SDP in the identified areas of concern.

Tony presented the results of Teaching Staff and Support Staff surveys. He advised that the number of responses indicated that the vast majority of teaching staff had taken part but that more support staff could be included. It was noted that there is a plan to include mid-day supervisors. He advised that thee are a small number of teaching staff indicating disagreement on most questions but that this was generally not the same person on all questions. With regard to questions like the one on Provision maps meetings he noted that, for example, a more experienced teacher may feel that they already have adequate provision in place and so feel they did not need a Provision Map meeting to enhance this. A parent governor asked about question 9 which indicates that 45% of staff do not know about the standards of Teaching and Learning in their area of responsibility. Tony agreed that this is an area for priority for the next SDP. One of the reasons cited for this is that it is difficult to make opportunities for Curriculum leaders in a particular area to do lesson observation in their area at every level of the school because of timetabling when they are on Release time. He noted that there had been a number of interesting responses to the questions about further training and these need to be considered for the SDP. He noted that it was very pleasing that there was 100% agreement on the questions regarding getting support and communication by Line Managers. Other feedback that will be considered includes improvements to make the staff management process more effective. There is also feedback from teaching and support staff that there is currently too much challenge within the Staff appraisal process and not enough support which is not helpful. It was pleasing to note however that the vast majority of

staff were clear about the vision and purpose within the school and it is likely the Don't know is a new member of staff.

From the small number of support staff responses he had identified the following differences from the teaching staff responses

- there is concern about access to professional development opportunities (43% disagreeing)
- whilst all staff are confident about their role 29% did not feel that their Line Manager communicated effectively.

Tony noted that these lower scores might be linked to some specific issues including the fact that many Teaching Assistants (TAs) are pulled in several directions and may have more than one Line Manger. In addition the school has a small number of higher level TAs and other TAs would like to do this course or have high aspirations in working in some other area of the school such as in a SENCO role and the school is not able to meet all these aspirations as budgets and training opportunities become more limited and the staff structure cannot accommodate all aspirations within the school. He noted that on the question on which areas have contributed to support staff professional development that courses in school scored a very low mark. This is because the school itself runs few courses in school for teaching assistants, with development for teaching assistants most often being sourced from professional advice from colleagues or external agencies such as the Specialist Teaching Team. There is an issue with external courses for teaching assistants being cancelled due to lack of take up.

ii) Consider paper, "Developing Our next SDP"

Tony advised that the School Development Plan has been drawn up from a variety of sources including outcomes for children, questionnaire, external advisors and the staff appraisal process. It looks to group feedback into key areas for action. Currently there are 6 identified areas:

- Improve outcomes in statutory assessment in Reading, Writing and Mathematics
- Improve Assessment and Self evaluation process for Science/ICT and Foundation subjects
- Improve Information for Parents (Information for Learning and Information for Governance)
- Curriculum Development
- Improve Outdoor Learning Environment
- "Character Education"

iii) Discussion re Draft Target Areas for our next SDP with view to agreement of Target Areas

In response to a question it was explained that Character education covers issues such as improving behaviour and more anti-bullying education, together with introduction of "Random Acts of kindness". It is planned to look at want is working effectively in other settings.

Governors were also advised that the Curriculum Committee would be looking in more detail at some of the relevant proposals. These include a Volunteer training programme ad the introduction of more external role models who will come into school to talk to the children including female scientists. It was noted that this is a

cheap and effective way of adding value that other schools are exploiting. Annabelle mentioned that the school already gets Stimulus volunteers in and Liz has worked with volunteers from Student Community Action. It was noted that with two Universities so close there should be some opportunities that can be explored. Jo advised that she works at Anglia Ruskin University so may be able to assist in setting up links. Jo as a Parent Governor noted that many parents may not be aware of these things and the profile should be raised. The Chair noted that this could be done through the website. It was agreed that both formal and informal networking amongst parents could provide a variety of resources and visitors.

One of the Parent Governors noted that she had seen statements on other school websites about stretching high achievers and asked if there were plans to look at this within the SDP. Tony advised that this would be essential as part of the work to improve outcomes and that the SDP includes a commitment to increase the percentage of children achieving above age related expectations. A variety of strategies were discussed including identifying Gifted and Talented children across the school and looking at raising standards in specific curriculum areas. In addition this could tie in with the homework policy to ensure that challenging homework is set. The importance of consistency in setting homework across all ages was emphasised by the Parent Governors. There needs to be consistency in both setting and marking homework so that parents understand the expectations. Tony confirmed that he saw this as an important area for additional work and is planning a Homework questionnaire as part of the review of homework policy.

One of the governors asked about the rolling out of eSchools for Parents to log in and was notified that the timetable has been finalised. In the next week children will start to receive their log ins and parents will be updated on this at the Meet the Head event the following day. In addition ePay will be trialled shortly with Year 3 and rolled out to the rest of the school on a week-by-week basis after half term. Concern was expressed about whether the introduction of e-payment would allow people to run up large bills, as one governor noted had happened at a local school. It was agreed that it was important that checks were put into the system to flag poor payers who would be followed up in the same way as currently. One of the Parent governors noted that some parents like to pre pay and it was important that this facility was available. It was agreed that the new system gave a fresh start and it was important that appropriate limits are put in from the start.

iv) Agreement of key means of monitoring SDP and assignation of Link Governor Roles (assuming agreement in (iii)).

The governors reviewed the suggested process for finalising the SDP and the suggested Governing Body activities relating to the SDP and confirmed that they were happy with this. The Chair also presented information on governors interests and suggested Link Governor Areas. Following agreement visits would need to take place and be reported back to the relevant Committee and any important information fed into the final SDP, which would come to the December FGB. It was agreed that the Chair should circulate the final version of the Link Visit spreadsheet to all governors confirming visits done and future responsibilities. Further to the earlier discussion it was agreed that an additional Link visit should be included to look at use of Volunteers. In addition it was agreed that Behaviour and anti-bullying

Zoe

should be looked at in the same visit and it was agreed that Gavin would do this work.

One of the governors asked if there are Job descriptions for the Link Governor roles and was advised that it is not possible to have a generic Job description but that work in Committees should give a steer to Link governors as to what hey are to focus on. In addition some visits should be postponed to later in the year to ensure there is adequate evidence n the area.

It was noted that in the past Sarah had been the link for Financial checking but would like to do something else. One of the governors was asked if they would consider this area; the nature of the area means that a termly visit is required. It was noted that one of the Staff Governors had expressed interest in the Science visit but since she is responsible for this area of the curriculum it would be necessary to find another governors to visit. In addition it was a Staff governor who was linked to data but that it would be useful for a more independent governor to carry out the work with her. It was noted that it will not be possible for governors to visit every area in the school and that the focus should be directed at Literacy & Numeracy (to provide information for the Curriculum Committee) but that subjects should be selected based on Strategic priority, importance on the SDP and where significant changes had been made e.g. the new PE curriculum. In answer to a question it was clarified that Link governors should contact staff members and that there is a protocol for Link visits

The Governing Body agreed unanimously that they were happy with the key Target Areas and suggested methods of monitoring within the School Development Plan

One of the governors asked how the SDP is fed back to Parents. This will take place through "Meet the Head" meetings and the executive summary will be on the school website. A suggestion was made that the SDP should be linked back to the Aims & Values of the school which are published on the website. Tony agreed this would be an excellent way of demonstrating the link between the plan and the vision for the school

Tony

8. Resources for Learning – draft Pay Policy 2015

Tony advised that the School Pay Policy had only minor changes from the previous year; this is an EPM model policy with minor changes to personalise for the school. Governors are required to consider additional pay increases to the 1% mandatory pay scale increase. The Governing body has discretion regarding whether those on the Upper pay spine and leadership pay spines. In addition, as a way of stretching the pay spine the increases at the top of the teaching staff spine can be increased to 2%. The recommendation from the unions is for a 1% increase and this helps the school strategically with teacher recruitment. In addition the school would like to stretch the top of the teaching spine since this will provide opportunities for recruitment of good staff. It was noted that there is not adequate budget available for the 2% increase to be given to other parts of the pay spine.

One of the parent governors asked about whether there is scope for more discretionary elements related to performance. She was advised that increments are already related to performance; teachers need to meet the criteria set out in

the pay policy. It was agreed that any extension of this would be difficult to quantify and standardise and could have a negative impact. Another governor suggested that consideration should be given to a different reward scheme that recognises and appreciates outstanding effort which is non financial or a small token award. The Governing Body agreed unanimously that there should be a 1% increase for all staff including the upper pay spine and management and that a 2% increase would be given to those already on or appointed to Point 6 and approved the draft Pay Policy for 2015. A question was asked about governor training for carrying out the Appraisal of the headteacher (as noted in the Pay policy 2.8.2) and the Board were advised that the Chair has undertaken this training. The Board were also advised that the dates in the policy (1.3) had a typo that needed correction (20115 should be 2015). It was noted that the Salary Committee is a sub group of the Resources Committee. 9. **AOB** There was no other business. Dates of future meetings and Agenda items agreed to date 10 Curriculum Committee – Wednesday, 14th October at 5.30 p.m. Target tracker (presentation open to all governors) Resources Committee – Thursday, 12th November at 6.15 p.m. Full Governing Body - Thursday, 10th December at 6.15 p.m. Prevent Presentation - Liz Steel 11 School improvement actions and outcomes from meeting Approve the customised Prevent statement for publication on the website Consider the draft Annual Governance statement Approve the following Policies: Safeguarding and Child Protection Policy (Cambs County Council draft) Child protection Whistleblowing Policy: guidance for Employees EPM Model Whistle blowing policy and procedure Receive the Child Protection Monitoring report to governors Receive the Safeguarding children in Education – checklist for Governing Approve the EPM Model Statement re Allegations of Abuse against Staff and Volunteers Receive the results of the Parent, Pupil and Staff Questionnaires Approval of the School Development plan Approval of the Draft pay policy

Signed	Date
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